

# MANAGEMENT UNIT 1U

## *Steese to Chena Hot Springs*

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### MANAGEMENT INTENT

**General.** Seven areas in this unit are designated settlement and may be offered for sale. The remainder of state land is retained in public ownership for multiple use management. The emphasis is on subsurface resource development, recreation, and maintaining fish and wildlife habitat.

The Chatanika River is one of the most popular recreation, hunting, and fishing rivers for Fairbanks residents. The river corridor in Subunit 1U2 is recommended for legislative designation as a State Recreation River (see also Chapter 4, Areas Recommended for Legislative Designation).

**Fish and Wildlife.** Fish and wildlife habitat is designated a primary use in subunits 1U1, 1U2, and 1U4, and a secondary use in Subunit 1U3. This area is an extensive prime-rated habitat for grizzly bear and caribou, as well as moose, black bear, furbearers, and small game (B-1 habitat along streams, B-2 habitat in remainder; see Appendix A, *Glossary*).

The Chatanika River is a critical-rated habitat for salmon. Strict enforcement of the water quality regulations is a priority in the Chatanika drainage.

**Forestry.** Forestry has been designated a primary use in Subunit 1U4. This subunit contains vast hardwood forests of moderate volumes and productivity.

**Minerals.** There are many active mining operations in this unit and potential for increased activity. Subunit 1U2, the Chatanika River corridor, is closed to new mineral entry and coal leasing because of conflicts with recreation and fish and wildlife habitat. Land disposals in Subunit 1U3 will be closed to new mineral entry at the time of sale. Subunits 1U1 and 1U4 are open to mineral entry.

**Recreation.** Recreation is designated a primary use in subunits 1U1 and 1U2, and a secondary use in Subunit 1U3.

Chena Dome is an outstanding natural feature. Portions of the Davidson Ditch should be identified by the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation and designated as a state historic site. For access to the White Mountains, eight 100-acre sites have been identified by the Bureau of Land Management. These sites and the Grange Hall Access Site will be retained and managed for recreation.

The remaining state lands at the potential Chena Sunny ski area should be sold or leased for private recreation development in accordance with a resort development plan (to be done by an interagency team). This would enable recreation and tourism businesses in the Chena Hot Springs area to identify the best possible downhill ski facilities.

The road-accessible Chatanika River in Subunit 1U2 is a highly popular float trip attraction. See Subunit 1E1 for additional management intent and guidelines for this river corridor. Subunit 1U2 is recommended for legislative designation as a state recreation river.

Opportunities for several easily accessible high country trail routes exist in this unit.

Although this management unit has many important trails, the trails listed below have unique recreational values and historical significance:

- The Circle-Fairbanks Historic Trail is the original route between Circle City and Fairbanks. Portions of the trail within the Borough and Tanana Basin boundaries are separated into a summer ridgetop trail and winter sled route along the Chatanika River. With the exception of a few patented mining claims near the trailhead at Cleary Summit, this 60-mile trail is on state land.
- The Chena Hot Springs Winter Trail is the original winter sled route between Chena Hot Springs and Fairbanks. The trail originated in the early 1900's and has been used extensively since that time. Current uses of this 50-mile trail include dog mushing, snow machining, horseback riding, and moving farm equipment.
- The North Fork Valley Trail extends northeast from Chena Hot Springs Road towards the Borough and Tanana Basin Boundaries. The trail is an extension of the Chena Hot Springs Winter Trail and was used in the 1983 Yukon Quest dogsled race. This 13-mile trail is used mainly by cross country skiers, dog mushers and snow machiners. A major portion of this trail passes through the Far Mountain disposal (Subunit 1U3) and is used for access through this area.

**Settlement.** Settlement is designated a primary use in Subunit 1U3. Approximately 11,300 acres may be offered for private ownership.

Caribou Creek Homestead (1U3a)	400 acres
Chena South Homestead (1U3b)	600 acres
Far Mountain Homestead (1U3c)	2,400 acres
Hunts Creek Homestead (1U3d)	600 acres
Mt. Ryan Homestead (1U3e)	3,000 acres
West Fork Homestead (1U3f)	4,000 acres
Springview Subdivision (1U3g)	300 acres

The settlement densities of Chena South, Hunts Creek, and West Fork homesteads should not exceed the number of acres divided by 20, as established in these offerings prior to the 1985 TBAP.

## MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Management guidelines that apply to all state land are listed in Chapter 2. Some or all of those guidelines may apply to uses in this unit.

**Facility Siting.** Siting of facilities within one-half mile of the ordinary high mark of the Chatanika River will be avoided to the extent feasible and prudent, consistent with the purposes for which the corridor was established.

**Oil and Gas.** Oil and gas exploration and development activities will be sited and timed to mitigate impact of fish and wildlife habitat and public use values of the river corridor. Specific mitigation measures will be developed as part of the lease sale process. Timing, topography, vegetation, and other factors will be considered.

**Trails.** A minimum 200-foot buffer (100 feet either side of centerline) will be retained in public ownership to protect the recreational use of the Chena Hot Springs Winter Trail, the North Fork Valley Trail, and the Circle to Fairbanks Trail.

### LAND-USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY MANAGEMENT UNIT 1U: *Steese to Chena Hot Springs*

Subunit	Primary Surface Uses	Secondary Surface Uses	Subsurface <sup>1</sup>	Prohibited <sup>2</sup> Surface Use	Comments
1U1	Public recreation	Wildlife habitat	Open	Land disposals Remote cabins	
1U2	Public recreation Wildlife habitat		Closed to location Closed to coal	Land disposals Remote cabins	Chatanika River is recommended for state recreation river status generally 1/4 mile either side of mean high water. See also Subunit 1E1
1U3	Settlement	Public recreation Wildlife habitat	Closed prior to sale Closed to coal	Remote cabins	Plan map legend: 1U3a - Caribou Cr. HS 1U3b - Chena South HS 1U3c - Far Mountain HS 1U3d - Hunts Creek HS 1U3e - Mt. Ryan HS 1U3f - West Fork HS 1U3g - Springview S
1U4	Forestry Wildlife habitat		Open	Land disposals Remote cabins	

<sup>1</sup> Subsurface designations refer to locatable minerals. All areas are available for leasing for leasable minerals, except as noted for coal.

<sup>2</sup> Other uses such as material sales, land leases, or permits that are not specifically prohibited may be allowed. Such uses will be allowed if consistent with the management-intent statement, the management guidelines of this unit, and the relevant management guidelines listed in Chapter 2.